

The Church an Engine of the State.

A

S E R M O N,

NOT PREACHED

ON THE LATE

GENERAL FAST, 1778.

B Y A L A Y M A N.

O Foolish GALATIANS! who hath bewitched you?

ST. PAUL.

L O N D O N:

Printed for J. ALMON, PICCADILLY; and J. BEW,
PATER-NOSTER-ROW, 1778.

The British Museum



P R E F A C E.

AS this Sermon (by a Preacher unordained) is written by the Author of the "Case philosophically stated between Great-Britain and her Colonies," * it is become necessary to animadvert on the Critical Reviewer's account of the latter, in the Review for February. Indeed, it cannot be called an account of the book, but rather a suppression of it; whereby the Reviewer is not only guilty of injustice to the Author, but of indignity to the Public. Who he is, I know not; but, as a Critic, he has been most superciliously remiss in his duty, ignorant in his department, or worse. A Reviewer's word ought not to be taken, for the merit or demerit of a book. Without sufficient extracts candidly laid before the Reader,

* This pamphlet is published for, and sold by Mr. Kearsley, Bookseller, in Fleet-street, London.

to enable him to judge for himself, he, with equal rudeness and presumption, anticipates the judgment of the Public, or rather substitutes himself in place of the Public. If he pronounces peremptorily of a publication, without specifying his reasons, he is either afraid to falsify his judgment by giving an extract, or he is justly chargeable with taking an unfair and ungentleman-like advantage of the Author. The hacknied apology of a Reviewer, "that he has neither time nor room for extracts from all books," will not answer, at present; as in the same month's review, wherein he mentions "the Case stated," he has large quotations from books not of so much importance. Nor is this remark made by the too fond parent of his literary offspring, but by many that have read the Pamphlet, and the Review. In reality, no subject can be of such consequence as that which would place the policy of a court, the administrative powers of government, on immutable principles, on a basis that cannot be shaken by human incidents. Such are the principles, and such is the basis, we find contained in the simple but perfect legislation of the New Testament. "The Case stated" proves and illustrates this doctrine

doctrine in a manner level to every apprehension, but that of a prime Minister, or a Reviewer. The one wishes to enjoy the emoluments of his place; and the other, to flatter him, while he continues in that place. Between the two, the unshackled, independent writer, is either treated with contemptuous silence, or opprobrious abuse. The first takes an undue advantage, from his high situation in power: the last, from a peculiarity in his line of business. He publishes every month; therefore, like a scold, is always sure of having the last word. The triumph of a cinder wife, and an oyster wench, would appear to be the triumph of a Reviewer.

BUT there was a difficulty, in the present case, unsurmountable to our doughty Critic. It operates as a pretext, not as a justification. The Author of "the Case stated," as already observed, takes up his subject on new ground, and would bring the science of politics, as every thing ought and must be brought, to the test of Christianity; as we *call* ourselves Christians, and seem to *pride* ourselves in the name. Now, had the Critic considered the Pamphlet in detail, he must either have acquiesced in the force

and conclusiveness of the Writer's argument, or have denied the competency of the New Testament, as an ultimate test of human conduct, and national character. The subject matter of "the Case stated," stands or falls with the substantial evidence derived from the Scriptures. The Critic durst not (with all his audacity) call in question the authority of Scripture, to decide ultimately every point within the system of human affairs: of course, the only alternative he had left him, was ungenerously to slur over all mention of the Author's reasoning, and to close the slovenly article with an impotent effort to be witty. The procedure was equally unmanly and disingenuous. The Writer had laid it down as an indisputable truth, that GEORGE III, King of England, and his Prime Minister, are as strictly included in the requisitions of the moral law, and the obligations of Christianity, as his majesty's gentleman-usher, or his lordship's valet de chambre: and that national or parliamentary injustice, cruelty, deceit, falsehood, and robbery, are of the same criminal and punishable nature, with injustice, cruelty, deceit, falsehood, and robbery, in private life.

THE policy of states may palliate every species of guilt and delinquency among men, guaranteed by the *ultima ratio regum*, armies and fleets : but God was not taught politics at St. James's, or Versailles, nor was he ever initiated into the secrets of the interior cabinets of princes ; beside that, *he* can execute all his measures, independent of military and naval armaments. Government was entirely of this opinion lately, by appointing a Fast-Day. The king, the bishops, and both houses of parliament, put themselves on a level, as self-recognized sinners, with cobblers, and draymen, on that day of confession. Hence they tacitly acknowledge the subordination of politics to Christianity, and their belief, that a failure in the councils of the nation, and the misfortunes of executive government, must find their eventual remedy in the resources of religion. * This

* Nothing can be a stronger proof, or a more melancholy one, that Heaven rejects and abominates the prayers of our national church, of Scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites, who think to be heard for their long prayers, and for taking the divine prerogative of vengeance upon them; (*vengeance is mine, and I will repay it, saith the Lord*) than the certainty of a French war succeeding the celebration of the late Fast-Day. An event more dreadful could not have overtaken Great Britain in her

is allowing the Writer all he wishes. Adversity makes us Christians : prosperity unmakes us. But what cause is adequate to the effect of keeping a Reviewer, (to compare great things with small) within the line of literary justice, or the liberal performance of his monthly engagements to his readers ? He either treats the writings of his betters with contemptuous silence, or he selects a few passages on purpose to exercise his splenetic humour, or misanthropic indisposition of mind. He is the humble pensioner of some Bookseller, or a dependant on the public for bread ; yet he assumes airs of dictatorship, in the republic of letters, that would not become even a LOWTHE, or a WARBURTON ; whose fortunes are superior, and whose abilities are universally acknowledged.

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her sins. She will have to fight the house of Bourbon, after the loss of America, like a combatant with one arm, attacking another that has two. Whatever may be the event, (at present deep hid in futurity) those violent blood thirsty men, who first precipitated us into a contention with our Colonies, must stand chargeable with all. A French war is the unavoidable consequence of the American. In a similar situation, we would have acted as the French have done. We threw down the gauntlet to them in America, and they have taken it up. We rejected the trade of the Colonies : they have solicited and obtained it !

THE late General Fast, as already mentioned, implied and exemplified every thing contained in "the Case stated;" while the critical Reviewer hid himself from conviction, as the mole hides itself from the sun. The former has not the apology of the latter: the latter acts from instinct. The redoubted Critic, therefore, should look out for a lunatic place of reception accommodated to kings, bishops, and senators; who are *so mad* as to allow, that government must bend at the shrine of religion, and that the science of politics is true or false, just or unjust, liberal or arbitrary, according as it can abide the test of Christian Ethics. *Nihil vero verius.* Farther,

THE Critical Reviewers have adopted an easy method of getting an Author off their hands, the generous spirit and tendency of whose writings they dislike, by marking him as an object of lunacy, therefore, a fit inhabitant for an hospital. Charitable creatures! Yet in the overflowings of their charity for others, they have forgot the common adage, (never more applicable than at present) "that charity should begin at home." Should a receptacle for political lunatics

natics be expedient, who prithee are so fit objects as those unhappy men, that are *mad enough* to persist in the wrong, even when it stares them in the face, and after they have instituted a *Fast-Day*, to atone for it? Such are our present ignorant, blundering, irresolute, irreclaimable ministers, with their sorry coadjutors of the quill, the Critical Reviewers. Even a madman, in so excellent a cause, as that of liberty, is a respectable being, in comparison with him who *grows mad* on the side of slavery and despotism. The one is a generous, elevated, sublime sort of madman. The other dark, sullen, malignant, and implacable. The one would rapturously take you by the hand, and lead you forth into creation, to enjoy all that is beautiful and enchanting around you. The other would seize you with the iron grasp of savage ferocity; drive you before him, like an ox or an ass, and plunge you into the horrors of a dungeon. Which of the two then should seem best intitled to *the closest cell*, and *straitest waistcoat*? The madman who smiles innocently in your face, and wishes to do you *every good*; or *the worse* than madman, who frowns, lours, and grins at you,

you, without wishing to do you *any* good! In short, is not the *monthly* madman, whose genius is periodical, and whose paroxysms of critical wit, increase with the moon, the true lunatic?—How easily may the weapons of these men be turned against themselves, were it worth while to smite a grasshopper, or blow away a midge from the mouth of a cannon! Beside,

WHY should the Writer be provoked at the Critic, beyond self-defence and necessary expostulation, as he writes (every review proves it) from mean partiality to men in power! A bias towards the court, either directly or indirectly, implies an interested motive. All power naturally degenerates into despotism; and to flatter that power, as naturally tends to increase its abuse. The governing powers are always too weighty in the scale opposed to the rights and privileges of the people. Therefore, it becomes every member of a free state, (especially the lettered sons of independence) not to increase *that dead weight*, but to throw whatever consequence he possesses into the other scale, so as to effect, as far as possible, an equipoise on the whole. Moreover, the Reviewer may be

told, (as from his petulant airs of dogmatism and *certifying*, * he seems not to know it) that the argument the present Writer has adopted, and means to defend, will be admitted and embraced, if revelation is to be credited, by an enlightened posterity in all nations, long after *our* Critic has been forgotten, and his *menstrual* labours buried with the trash and lumber of flavish literature, and court-spawned lucubration.—The rant and declamatory bombast of Doctor Johnson met with the hyper-critic's warmest approbation. Why? Because the said Doctor and Reviewer were, and are, embarked in the same political bottom. An embarkation that (sooner or later) must end in shipwreck; as the auspicious gale of Liberty does not fill their sails, nor the steady hand of virtuous public spirit direct the steerage.—Moreover,

THERE is a sin, affecting modern nations, which, though overlooked or disregarded, is of high magnitude in the sight of God; that is, the extreme and excessive obeisance, accompanied with awe and terror, paid our temporal rulers :
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* “ We certify,” are the Reviewer's words. The pope of Rome issuing his Bull. *Risum teneatis? Ego et Rex meus.*

to speak out at once, I mean kings. I will venture to say, that a person going into the presence chamber of an earthly sovereign, feels himself more awfully impressed, more overcome with a sort of respectful confusion and embarrassment, than when standing in the presence of the Almighty, as a worshipper. I believe every one, who has been in these apposite situations, knows it, and has felt it. This may properly be called *civil idolatry*. It degrades a worshipper of the Deity to the humiliation of worshipping a *fellow mortal*. Treason against the Majesty of Heaven passes unpunished, and even unnoticed, every day. Treason against the paltry Majesty of a paltry state, is made capital, and the punishment is never remitted. We must suppose God not tenacious of his honour, not jealously watchful, respecting his sovereign prerogatives, should he overlook this. “Render unto Cæsar
 “ the things that are Cæsar’s, and unto God
 “ the things that are God’s.” This is the divine precept. But bestowing those names and titles on a man, (a mortal, and a sinner, like ourselves) which only belong to the Deity, is *rendering unto man the things that are God’s*. The names and titles here alluded to, are these,

among others that might be mentioned. Most High! Most Mighty! Most Puissant! Most Dread! Most Sacred! Most Excellent! These are now become common idioms of language, and are repeated every day with more profound humility, and guarded circumspection, than any of the ascriptions or doxologies of the Church.

TIME, and the universal adoption of nations, have given them currency, and sanctioned their use. But I am not afraid to declare, because I stand in the presence of God, whose *most dread*, *most sacred*, and *most excellent Majesty*, I alone acknowledge, that no body of men whatsoever has a right to bestow these names and titles; and no individuals whatsoever a right to accept of them, or appropriate them to their own use. Nay, mortals below the rank of kings have titles assigned them bordering upon divine. Your Eminence! Your Excellency! Your Grace! Your Worship! Most Worshipful! Most Reverend! “He who humbleth himself shall be exalted:” “but he who exalts himself shall be debased.”

I SHALL be called, no doubt, a republican, a democratic enthusiast, a leveller: but I am
contented.

contented to share these epithets with the Writers of the New Testament.—The application of divine titles to kings, and civil governors, which I would call national blasphemy, and the exalted vain-glorious opinion each state has of itself exclusively, called patriotism, but which I would call narrow and selfish pride, regarding the world at large, of the worst species and tendency, as they certainly amount to the guilt of Lucifer and his hierarchy, will as certainly meet with their fall. Most kingdoms are now hastening into a state of war, first begun by OURSELVES in America. The result will be, I doubt not, a recognition of God, as the Supreme Creator, Father, and Ruler of the world, not in churches, by the lips of mercenary, temporizing priests, hired for the occasion, like heralds to run over the titles of a prince or grandee; but by the great aggregate body of the people, at all times, and in all places, restoring to HIM, from impostors and usurpers, his own proper names and designations; and abolishing, among themselves, all titles, whether personal or hereditary, but those of Benefactors, Saviours, and Fathers of their country. This abolition to take place, not only in civil, but religious matters. Sacerdotal titles are no less an infringe-

infringement on the rights and immunities of the great Christian Lawgiver, than imperial titles on those of God, the monarch paramount of the world. Who indeed is *Reverend*, *Right Reverend*, or *Most Reverend*, but Jesus Christ? Yet he, *even He*, did not assume them upon earth!—Happy and glorious are the people, who have first stepped forward to assert, support, and defend, the necessity and expediency of this general restoration of right and prerogative to God; and of making no other precedence or distinction in families hereditary, but *wisdom, knowledge, virtue, and integrity*!—Respected and revered also be those writers, who in rejection of court favour and pecuniary rewards, have thrown light and credit on this (at present) unpopular, but most interesting subject; and have proved it practicable, to have a *perfect form of democratical government*, without the guilt of idolatrous prostration, or genuflexion, to particular fellow mortals! *—But to return from this digression.

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* A justly celebrated Lady has beautifully sketched out such a form of government, in a tract, among others, with which she means soon to favour the public. I look up to Mrs. MACAULAY, as intended by Providence to be *sine vi, sine armis*, the legiflatrix of the New World.

THUS have I attempted to do a piece of justice to the public, as well as to myself, by animadverting on those insolent bashaws of literature, the Critical Reviewers. Is it any matter of wonder, that civil government should be running headlong into a despotic system, when we find the intolerance and iniquity of the star-chamber revived, in our monthly courts of criticism ! Reviewers, indeed, cannot call in the civil power to back their decisions, by the suppression of books ; but from their bigoted line of conduct, towards Authors, their partial, mutilated exhibition of their writings, their impertinent allusions of a personal nature, and vulgar familiarities with the fame of Writers superior to themselves, and whose train of reasoning and series of arguments they are afraid to lay before the candid and impartial public ; it may be fairly deduced, that those Authors they treat with studied neglect, or malignant exposure, they also would fine and imprison, after having their works burned by the common hangman, did they possess the power, as well as the will of a *Laud*.—We talk of British liberty and independence, but delusively. While mere appearances soothe and seduce us into a fatal

fatal security, we are imperceptibly losing our substantial hold of them, in privy councils, parliaments, and (O shame to genius and learning!) in the studies of our Scholars and Critics.

WE talk of his Roman Catholic Holiness, and deride his claims of supremacy and infallibility; but with much injustice, much hypocritical finesse.—The delegated trustees and agents of the people, in parliament assembled, with the king at their head, absolutely assert supremacy and omnipotence, *in all cases whatsoever*; two words only claimable by the eternal Ruler of the world, the Creator of Heaven and Earth.—No wonder our fleets and armies have been disgraced, when in the confidence of blasphemous pretension, we have left God nothing to do for us! when we assume to ourselves his incommunicable prerogatives, and go forth to battle in the almightiness of our own prowess!—Not only in our national convention of senators, are those presumptuous and audacious terms adopted; but we find them also in our monthly conventions of Critics. They *dictate*, *decree*, and *certify*, with such decisive airs of authority, that the sentiment of supremacy and infallibility in letters *must* be at the bottom of all. No wonder,

wonder, therefore, that the genius of liberal enquiry, the spirit of deeply investigating the common equal rights of mankind, and limiting the powers of delegated trust, should have taken their flight cross the Atlantic, and left to venal majorities in parliament, to bishops, parasites, pensioners, and reviewers, the lucrative exhibition of politics reduced to a court-mummy in preserve; of religion shrivelled to a skeleton of dry syllogisms; and of literature, in scraps and fragments, like rust-eroded medals, or the broken rarities of *Herculaneum*, set up to monthly sale.—

AFTER all, how was it possible that our Critic could speak favourably of “the Case stated,” when the following particulars are specified, especially when this note in “the Case stated,” relative to Mr. Wesley and the Reviewer, is laid before the Reader. Forgiveness is not a human virtue, however it may be a Christian grace. Here is the note. “*The Critical Reviewers* would screen him most shamefully (Mr. Wesley, a servile plagiarist from Doctor Johnson) by alledging he could not find better thoughts or expressions: an excuse for all literary theft, even
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should a new set of Reviewers arise, pilfer the critical, and vend their monthly labours as their own." Case stated, page 40.—Here the galled jade winces. *Rem acu tetigi*.—Moreover those two general arguments, on which are founded the reasoning of "the Case stated," could not possibly have a fair hearing at the bar of the Critical Reviewers. They militate strongly against the present system, and in favour of the Americans. The first is this, "Parliaments cannot be *supreme* in all cases whatsoever, without being *infallible* also." The second as follows. "Colonies when they find themselves competent, that is, *come politically of age*, may, and of right should, in consequence of an *unanimity*, nay, a *majority* of voices, throw off all subjection to the parent state: a power derived from God, and authorized by the necessity of things." Case stated, pages 1, and 45.—These positions would seem plain to common sense: but *that* of the Reviewers, is uncommon sense. They would seem only declaratory and illustrative of *Magna Charta*: but *Magna Charta* must first have a royal patent in its favour, and an *imprimatur* from their High Mightinesses the Critical Reviewers, before it shall

shall be suffered to meet the public eye.—We *certify* this, to appropriate the dignified language of a brother censor ; and do further *certify*, when the *substance* of religion, liberty, and literature, has taken up its final residence in the new Western world, that the Critical Reviewers shall be deemed fit and proper guardians and conservators of the *shadow* left behind.—

It cannot escape observation also, how unworthily the Critical Reviewers have treated our great Female historian, Mrs. MACAULAY, in their February Review. Instead of preserving the delicacy, purity, and dignity of Criticism, they have prostituted their office to the meanness of tea-table inuendo, and gossipping chit-chat. Even the Historian's learned and venerable friend, Dr. WILSON, has not escaped them. An act of exalted disinterestedness, of pre-eminent generosity, to one of the FIRST LITERARY PERSONAGES OF OUR DAY, they have endeavoured to throw into shade, into the fresco of malevolent remark.—The decay of public virtue; the vicious relaxation of national manners; the misfortunes attending our arms; the sudden eclipse of British glory, and the too

probable evils that surround us, are not enough: the Reviewers must add their mite (all in their power) to the calamities of the times, and the disgraces that have sunk us in the esteem of nations, by endeavouring to suppress that spirit which can *only* restore us to empire and honour. —Our armies defeated, or rendered unoperative abroad; and the superior exertions of private virtue ridiculed at home; not to mention the illiberal treatment most publications on the side of Liberty meet with from our literary judicatures, are sure proofs, that we are sinking under the weight of our own degeneracy; besides exhibiting a melancholy presage of our hastening ruin. The plausibilities of mere exterior cannot last long, unsupported by the reality. All is silence and sunshine often, before the volcano tremendously bursts, or the earthquake no less tremendously opens. Nor will the piteous old woman-like ejaculation of a Reviewer for peace (see Critical Review for February, article “the Case stated,”) save the nation from the consequences of her own persisted-in folly and temerity, or liquidate the share of guilt the Reviewer has more than in common with other men, by a glaring partiality, on monthly record

cord against him, to those very men in power, that have precipitated us into our present dishonourable and perilous situation. The sins of the common people are not chargeable with our misfortunes. No! The sins of the rulers and guides of the people, and of those, who by their periodical labours, should support the principles of the constitution, and light up the generous flame of liberty through these realms, Members of parliament, Bishops, and Reviewers; the sins of these men, I repeat it, are the specific cause of our decaying manufactures, our curtailed trade, our degradation of national character, and the strong appearances of an approaching dissolution of a free state.—When the sons of science and letters exercise the pen, in conjunction with civil and military power, to countenance an unjust and despotic system, we must either become abject, voluntary slaves, or save ourselves with arms in our hands, by a second revolution. *——

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* Added to common sins, we may here again mention that flagrant offence, already taken notice of in this Preface, which Heaven cannot always pass over, "*the shameful prostitution of God's peculiar names, and characteristic titles, to futile sinful fellow*"

THE foregoing strictures on the Critical, apply, though somewhat in a qualified sense, to the Monthly and London Reviewers. It is astonishing how these men love to trudge on in the trammels of partial politics, and selfish opinions. A nation talking vain-gloriously of itself, and introducing into all conversations its antiquity, majesty, its legislative pre-eminence, and superiority to other nations, is nothing better than an individual launching out into self-eulogy, and self-admiration. Vanity in private life is a sure proof of weakness; vanity in a nation, of national imbecility. While those interested sycophants, that would flatter and buoy up this vanity, do all in their power to render an object of pity, an object of contempt. Our Reviewers have no more idea of a future, universal

"fellow mortals." The clergy to a man acquiesce in it, nay, go the profane length of attempting to justify it! They affect to be the servants of the Most High, and the disciples of the Lord Jesus Christ; yet they burn incense on the altar of ambition, and offer up, in sacrifice, the honour of their Maker, and their Master, to a fellow creature!—Bishops must first cease to be idolatres, before they can reform themselves, or be employed as instruments to push forward the schemes of Divine Administration. Beside, they have given their votes on the bench for war—*bella, horrida bella*—and dyed their lawn sleeves deep in the blood of brethren and protestants!—

versal government, under God, the Supreme
 Ruler of the world, than² the official *devil* to
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without being victorious, as did lately our ministers and generals,

I would not be understood to mean any thing so visionary and romantic as a *Millenium*; but that all nations, some time or other, will regulate their conduct towards one another, by the *forbearing* and *forgiving* precepts of Christianity; consequently, that all nations will be cemented and consolidated into one great community, by one common principle pervading the whole. This will virtually and substantially be the same thing, as if God, by visible representation, or *shekinah*, should preside over and govern all the kingdoms of the earth. The prophetic spirit of the New Testament absolutely looks forward to a sameness of religion, laws, and interests, before the termination of our system. But how can this happen, if every kingdom continues selfishly affected to itself, magnifies and idolizes itself, and beholds all other kingdoms with a jealousy, a distrust, irritable, vindictive, and ready to rush into aggression and violence, on the slightest occasion? Let the Reviewers step forth and unravel the difficulty here. We are assured that men, as individuals,

duals, must adopt the temper and dispositions of Christianity, before they can be accepted or rewarded, as subjects of God's moral government, or, which is the same thing, as the disciples of Jesus Christ. Now, this temper, these dispositions, must be uniform, consistent, and permanent. A man, must carry them from private life, into the privy councils and parliaments of the state; feel their energy and influence in his deliberative, as well as executive capacity; otherwise, a monstrous absurdity presents its hydra head. It is this, that men must be virtuous, self-denied, humble, placable, and forgiving, in private life; but in public responsible situations, it is necessary they should be void of virtue, selfish, proud, implacable, and unforgiving. Reviewers will discover greater powers of ingenuity and casuistry, than they have ever yet done, to reconcile this contradiction. Yet, until they do reconcile it, they ought to have the modesty and good manners to be silent in the dispute agitated between Great Britain and America. Else they only skim along the surface of the subject, and talk about it and about it, till they have talked

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every one asleep, but themselves.—The buoy is ever in a state of agitation on the top of the current, while the maffy plummet, after having found the bottom, the bed of pearl, refts there. For my part, if we, calling ourselves Christians, do not recognize God's fpecial interference (though his agency be invifible) in the political concerns of this world, I can fee no difference between us and a fociety of wasps or bees, deftroying one another. Personal pride, or felf-confidence, is ftrongly ftigmatized in fcriptue: national pride, or felf-confidence, would feem the fame offence in accumulation.—We may impute our difgraces and misfortunes as a nation, to this, that, and the other, ingenious caufe: but our going forth in the fulnefs of our own ftrength, in the pride of our fleets and armies, without acknowledging God in our councils and fenates, and to attack an innocent, virtuous, and induftrious people, between whom and us, the protecting care of the Creator had placed a gulph of water fome thoufand miles broad, *is the true and only caufe!*—Reviewers may laugh at this, anxious for the little concerns
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of three little islands, and disdainfully vaunting themselves in the invincibility of the British navy: but they ought to consider, that Greece, that Rome, was in our predicament once, as great, mighty, opulent, and——boastful as we. Where are they now?——

BUT Reviewers, like placemen and pensioners, love to hang by their posts. Yet, when our present constitution shall be dissolved (it seems running fast into dissolution) and shall be revived in an American form, Reviewers will be forced to shrink away one by one, as did the retailers of accusation heretofore, who, as a proof of their innocence, were desired *to cast the first stone*. It is no matter to what place LIBERTY takes her flight. Wherever she resides, there is one's country, there is one's paradise. In truth, liberty and christianity are the same. Tyranny makes us slaves: Christianity makes us freemen.——

A FEW words more, regarding the Reviewers, shall end this Preface. These men have a notable method of rendering their censorial task easy. When they do not chuse to enter the lists with

an Author; they all at once bravely suppose him thrown down, as in conflict, and treat him accordingly. A baboon acting over his feats of assault and offence, round the sleeping lion.—When they start back affrighted from taking up the consideration of an argument, on original principles, and extended ground, they have nothing to do but to say, “poh, this Author deals in hard words, unintelligible expressions, rhapsody, &c. &c.”—These pigmy critics standing tip-toe on some hillock of Great Britain, and poking out their foolish necks, think they see the whole world; and that the great Creator’s providence and power, cannot act beyond their magic circle. They were born in Britain: Britain, therefore, is the whole earth to them, and though but a speck on the terrestrial globe, monopolizes the whole favour of Heaven. Had these men been born in a stable, they would have looked upon horses as their brethren, and prepared their backs for the saddle, and their mouths for the bit.—

Non tali auxilio, nec defensoribus istis,

Tempus eget.



A SERMON,

A

S E R M O N,

NOT PREACHED

ON THE LATE

G E N E R A L F A S T.

When ye spread forth your hands, I will hide mine eyes from you;
when ye make many prayers, I will not hear. **YOUR HANDS
ARE FULL OF BLOOD!!!** **THE BIBLE.**

IT will be asked here, where is my pulpit? where is my commission for preaching?—The answer is ready. My pulpit is the Press; and my commission is that which I received from the great Creator, when he gave me my being, and the privileges belonging to it. When he breathed into my nostrils the breath of life, he gave me the high prerogative of thinking for myself, of expressing or writing these thoughts, and of publishing them to the world, if I please.—What bishop (as such) has an authority equivalent to mine? He derives his from a *fellow mortal*.

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It matters not whether *that* fellow-mortal be his Holiness at Rome, or his Majesty at St. James's. The medium is the same, that is, it is not divine. I derive my authority from the Creator and Governor of the world. I preach to the species at large, at the head of whom God himself is, and under him Jesus Christ: not to an insular corner of that world, where an *elected* individual presides, or a delegate under him; George the Third, or the ostensible Minister of the day. It is true, they form a part of my auditory, but, a very small part, in comparison with the whole. Let Preachers, from magnificent archbishops, to puny methodistical ranters, proudly immure themselves in their little wooden circumferences (the narrowness of the place, emblematic of their religious narrowness) saying to the unreflecting circles around them, "I am of Paul, I am of the Apollos, I am of Cephas:" mine be the more expanded ambition, to have the earth and the heavens for my pulpit, and my congregation the whole human race.

BESIDE, here is my specific scriptural warrant for preaching, which no bishop, or community of bishops, can either bestow, or take away. "He that believeth in me," that is, every one, laymen as well as cleric; "the works that I do," that is, all the offices of the Christian ministry; "shall he do also." This is a decisive passage, from the mouth of our common Master, in favour of laymen, but
against

against the usurped authority of ecclesiastics. Like other valuable portions of the word of God, it has been pertinaciously overlooked. Men do not read the Bible, now-a-days, for themselves, because they keep a set of men in pay to save them the trouble. Upon this shameful neglect of laymen, the claims of the priesthood have been built, and an astonishing sacerdotal polity erected, repugnant to the equal rights of mankind, unknown to the scriptures, and unfavourable to the reception of the gospel, among Jews, Turks, and Heathens.—

OTHER considerable recommendations are in my favour. The members of the priesthood preach only for *hire*. Keep tithes from them, and the prospect of rising to honourable distinctions in the church, and most of our clergy would no more mount a pulpit, to preach the gospel of Christ, than a player would act Shakespeare's plays on the stage, without his gratuity for the night, or the season. In truth, without their yearly emoluments, how could they have their fine houses, chariots, liverymen, sumptuous tables, parties of pleasure, &c. these appendages and rewards of the gospel! Besides, without them, they would disobey one of their Master's commands, a defaulture, to be sure, they are never guilty of. "Make unto yourselves friends of the Mammon of unrighteousness, that when ye fail, they may receive you into everlasting habitations."

My

My motives, in sermonizing, are not lucrative. Nay, I shall probably lose, in a pecuniary sense, by my endeavours to preach—*common sense, common decorum, and common honesty*.—My sermon will contain other peculiarities likewise.—I was not dubbed a preacher by the imposition of hands.—*Imposition of hands!*—An honest English term, though unknown to bishops, for deceit and robbery. Implying first, the robbing the eternal God of his highest prerogative, the imparting of his own most holy spirit; and secondly, their gross deception of fellow mortals, who, it is to be presumed, believe that the bishop, at ordination, has actually imparted this spirit.

FARTHER; whereas the clergy generally aggrandize, nay, idolize themselves, in their sermons, as a class of men divinely instituted: mine, on the contrary, would represent them in their proper colours, as intruders into office, and absolutely superceding the preachers of the New Testament. They dare to delegate an authority to one another, in ordination, which they never possessed themselves, beside hanging on the powers of this world for support and countenance. Of course it follows, that the late *fast day* was their's, not the King's. Bishops enjoined it: the heralds proclaimed it. Laymen have too much good sense and decency, to persuade themselves they have any power to make men fast or pray, against their will. "If they do chuse to fast and pray, Proclamations

clamations have no merit: if they do not, they have no terrors. In either case they are non-efficient *felo's de se*.

How lamentable is it, therefore, and how does it prove the utter degeneracy of Britons, that the late *fast* was generally observed with greater strictness and devotion, than the Sabbath for ordinary is. This is the obvious inference: we are disposed to obey man rather than God; George the Third, rather than Jesus the Son of God. Obedience is due to the King, as our civil magistrate, whom we have ourselves appointed, and pay; but no farther. When he takes upon him spiritual legislation, the right of dictating to our minds, in cases only referable to God, every one is justified in disobeying, and will be rewarded, in another world, for boldly abiding the consequences. "Call no one Father, no one Master upon earth;" that is, in religious matters.

Nothing so truly ascertains the character of the times, so strikingly points out our ripeness for some awful revolution, that shall severely punish, while it may tend to reform us, than our superstitious observance of *holidays*, when we have ceased to observe the decalogue or moral law. The Jews, as their final destruction by the Romans drew near, grew more and more attached to the observation of days, and months, and years. We likewise, (would to God the
remark

remark could not be made!) in proportion as we have broken the commandments of God, are become more assiduous in obeying the injunctions of fellow mortals (bishops and civil magistrates) and falling down to idols of paper, called *forms of prayer*.

MOREOVER, at the very time that Britons have ignominiously failed to command success in the field (once the glorious characteristic of Britons) they boldly and presumptuously demand an audience of heaven, and plead the justness and worthiness of their cause. They brand themselves, in the form of prayer, as sinners, yet recommend the goodness of their cause to the protection and blessing of heaven. But how can the cause of sinners be good? It is a palpable solecism in terms. Bishops may as well contend, that badness is the act of becoming good, and that morality consists in finning.—

It is of no importance to know from what cause Britons have fallen short of success; whether from a relaxation of ancestral virtue and valour; or from the superior wisdom and unanimity, (rendered propitious by Almighty God) of their opponents in arms. The fact is, we have failed, and the Americans been prosperous, in the same degree. Shall we then, at this piteous dilemma, apply to OLD WOMEN, dressed in surplices, lawn sleeves, and mitres, for a renovation of British spirit, a re-animation of British heroism?

heroism? These very *old women* too, wallowing in luxury and the love of this world! "How are the "mighty fallen!"—If bishops would do effectual good to their insulted and injured country, suffering in every nerve, and bleeding in every vein, let them, in the name of Christian magnanimity, together with the inferior clergy, instantly form themselves into regiments, get serjeants to discipline and teach them the military art. This will evince their sincerity, and at the same time, their true greatness and dignity of mind.—Many of them are robust able-bodied men, fit to serve his majesty king George. Those among them that have had their constitutions broken down with indolence, indulgence, and high living, will find more relief in this active line of life, than from all the Doctors, and Mineral Waters in the World. Since they have adopted the present vindictive and bloody system, and would exterminate millions of virtuous free men, for defending their lives and property, let the established clergy pass over the Atlantic as one man, and meet the Americans on equal terms in the field. Instead of *praying* against them, in churches and chapels, with sneaking cowardly devotion, let the English and Scottish clergy *fight* them, if they dare. Christianity inspires courage, if their cause is christianity; and truth insures conquest, provided their cause will bear the scrutiny of truth.

THEY

THEY are useless in the stations they now occupy, unless to fulfil the scriptures, by identifying in their persons those false Christs and false Prophets, which the true Christ and true Prophet, has affectionately warned us against. We can do without them. We have the New Testament in our possession, (thank God) which is fully sufficient for life and manners, and to lead us into the kingdom of Heaven. The preceptive part of the New Testament (in which alone the people are concerned) no more requires explanation now, than the words of our Saviour, and his Apostles, required explanation, when they uttered them. We have, therefore, no business for so enormous a body, as the clergy. The minister for the time being, I allow, has. The clergy have ever been one of the main spokes in the wheels of government, without which, their motion would have been often fatally obstructed, perhaps destroyed. They are a preponderating weight on the minister's balance on all occasions, whatever his system may happen to be. HIM they affect to call their master, has not so hearty, so uniform an obedience from them, as the Premier. Even our present awful and portentous situation would not have happened, (to the honour of Britain, protestantism, and humanity,) had the established clergy taken a general decided part against our late invasive, sanguinary measures.

THE Gospel is a gospel of *peace*: Christianity is a system of *forbearance* and *forgiveness*: the hierarchy, therefore, would have had both on their side, and been remembered with the warmest gratitude by posterity, had they counteracted the violent and desolating plan of an obstinate, misinformed, bloody administration. But the dye is cast; and the clergy of the English and Scottish churches will have the singular satisfaction of reflecting, that they have been steadily instrumental in bringing about a dismemberment of the British empire; and, in the course of things, of reducing the once glorious islands of Great Britain and Ireland, to the pitiful condition of provincial dependencies on some great and powerful neighbour.—Whatever freedom and keenness therefore, respecting the clergy, are to be found in the following pages, they justly deserve them. They assume the character, and are exorbitantly paid for it, of being the preachers of *righteousness*, *mercy*, and *peace*; yet they have strengthened the hands of the Minister in violating these, and setting at nought the first requisitions of christianity *.—So much by way of introduction. Return we now to the consideration of Fast Days; only taking occasion to inform the reader, that we must deviate from the divisions usual

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* Whoever would wish to see the justest and most finished Portraits, because true, of the spirit and principles of the hierarchy, may consult Mrs. MACAULAY's history, *passim*: a work of intrinsic merit, to all true Britons and Protestants, and what cannot fail to render the matchless writer the admiration of future ages.

in sermons, in the present discourse; and will be contented with the common paragraph mode of writing, as the sentiment may lead us.

THE idea of a Fast Day has more of a Jewish spirit in it, than that of Christianity. All the positive institution of the Jews were abrogated by the Christian dispensation, if we except the decalogue, which is a summary of moral obligation, and must, in the nature of things, be immutable and eternal. God was the only law-giver among the Jews: all their public observances, therefore, were peculiarly sanctioned by his authority, and were observed with a strictness, that would not otherwise have happened, and with an unanimity, that did not leave out an exception. But Theocracy ended with the Jews, and so did all their festivals, and public holydays. Christianity did not substitute any in place of them. It sentimentally operates, or should operate, on the *inward*, not the *outward* man, not by external *signs*, but internal *convictions*: not through the medium of courts and hierarchies, but the holy spirit of the living God.—What right then has any modern K—— to institute a Fast Day? To proclaim a Fast Day, is to create a *new* day. The peculiar duties of a day constitute its moral identity; so that to prescribe particular duties, for a particular day, differs not from the creation of a new day, in the calendar of time. Ridiculous as the thing may be, it is certainly true,

true, so far as a *mortal man* can alter the nature of a day, with regard to its intellectual observance.

MOREOVER : as God alone, by the medium of his servants, appointed Fast Days among the Jews, and did not delegate the power to any substitute ; modern kings, by presuming to exercise *this* power, so far invade *his* dominion, and assume *his* prerogative. Nay, as God, in consequence of the abolition of the Jewish hierarchy, and the dispersion of its members, ceased to exert *this* prerogative himself ; Kings, now-a-days, claim a right *beyond* their Maker, and arrogantly would perpetuate the observance of what *his* wisdom deemed no longer necessary.—The contrast here is pointed, and should redden the cheeks of kings and privy counsellors with shame and confusion.—I am not afraid boldly to maintain this, as I have my Bible to support me, and my conscience to justify me. In comparison with these, the force of prerogative, or the obligations of precedent, are nothing better than the bye-laws of a tavern club, to set aside an Act of Parliament. Farther,

THE ——— and his ——— from personal consciousness of sins and failings, had an undoubted right to humble themselves in sackcloth and ashes, before the face of Almighty God : but *they* exceeded all charity and decorum, by concluding the residue of the kingdom to be as bad as *themselves*. The people are not by

many degrees as bad as *they*, being unchargeable with the worst of crimes, the monstrous abuse of power, and the prostitution of authority. The—and his—ought to know themselves best, “and what manner” of spirits they are of,” throughout the astonishing and mysterious transactions of three years past, wherein millions have been expended, and thousands of lives made a sacrifice of—to purchase disappointment and disgrace: but *they* have no right whatever to enter the bosoms of their neighbours, and take upon *them* to specify *their* sins and transgressions. These are between God and the individual, and are not to be either ascertained or expunged by proclamation. I insist on it, as a subject of a greater potentate than any earthly governor, that no—or—upon earth has any right to *make* me fast or pray, but when I please myself. *They* may as lawfully command me to sleep or wake, eat or drink, breathe or not breathe, contrary to the course of nature, and my own inclination. However,

I would acquit both the—and his—of so great an enormity, as *forcing* me, by proclamation, to fall on my knees when I do not chuse it, or with the conviction of my being dishonest, and basely hypocritical, if I did. Really, in such a case, the—and—would be my idol, my God; and my prayers, flagrant idolatry; as the *true* God, has neither commanded or warranted me to be a worshipper on *the occasion*, I would impute the whole farcical solemnity
to

to the most reverend and right reverend circle round the — in short, to the archbishop of Canterbury, and his suffragan—*mutum pecus*; who naturally wish to expiate their ambition, hypocrisy, prostitution of office, worldly-mindedness, pride, haughtiness, luxury, and high-living, by so easy a method, as the fashionable state finesse of a *Fast Day*; vainly expecting that God, an all-seeing righteous God, will overlook *their* shameful delinquency, for months, years, and generations, on account of the parading and proud humility of a *few hours*. The sentiment is monstrously absurd, and could originate nowhere but among *bishops*. The pity only is, that kings and ministers of state, at this improved and illuminated time of day, should suffer themselves to be influenced by a set of men, whose chief venerableness is their black coats, and whose chief purity is the whiteness of their lawn sleeves! *A set of men*, who have, for a thousand years and more, embroiled states and kingdoms, torn asunder the unity of empire, as well as the bonds of peace, and set beings of the same species and religion, to butcher and destroy one another! I here mean the clergy as an established body: many exceptions occur among individuals.

As a state manœuvre, a political forlorn hope, I had no objection to the pro——n, nor would impugn it; but as a religious act connected unutterably with the inward affections, and only referable to God, it possessed no obligatory force whatever;
 nay,

may, was itself a nullity. But, as already observed, *the bishops* were at the bottom of this pharisaical piece of craft; this expeditious method to atone for a long life of episcopal vanity, arrogance, tyranny, voluptuousness, and avarice. It is full time, when the British empire is shaken from within, by a sort of political earthquake; when her glory and majesty *seem* to be laid in the dust; and, with her, every good and honest man, in evident danger of sinking; it is high time, I repeat it, to make a direct attack on this sun-clad, mitred, and lawn-sleeved body; who with the fourth part of the opulence of the kingdom, annually pouring into their pockets, by their sloth, negligence, time-serving, secularity, intolerant spirit, and unexemplariness of conduct, have been powerfully, though often *invisibly* instrumental, in bringing government and these realms into the most perilous and tremendous situations! *Bishops* have beheld the increasing degeneracy and profligacy of all ranks and conditions, for generations, with perfect ease and indifference, loitering on their settees, and lolling in their painted chariots, all the while.—

BUT even this, glaringly out of character as it is, constitutes but a small part of the criminality of *their order*. By their court-bred duplicity, mean adulation of superiors, eternal hunting after honours and preferments, superstitious attachment to a political impoundment of Christianity, malignity of sentiment towards other denominations of Protestants, and let me add, exquisite arts of sanctimonious dissimulation,

mulation, *Bishops* will be the ruin of the British empire, sooner or later; an empire once glorious and pre-eminent among nations. For a while, owing to such divine men as HOADLEY, *they* appeared to have received enlightened conceptions of civil and religious liberty; but now, *the bench*, (two or three perhaps excepted) seem diverging fast into antient superstition, into extravagant ideas of regal and parliamentary power; which in the last result, or when the liberties of the people are critically at stake, is certainly controulable by the original authority that created it, and, indeed, supports it. Kings, ministers of state, and senators, *without the people at their back*, would be no more than a set of jointed wire-hung puppets, without the shewman behind, to give them utterance and mobility. This conspicuous relapse and deterioration of bishops, is varnished over indeed, but by no means altered, by their *piety* in instituting Fast Days extraordinary, humbly to intreat heaven—not to take part with the virtuous and generous Americans; or in the bishop of London's lately issuing a rescript, more strictly to observe GOOD FRIDAY. In these respects, *that church* which they have *established* sermons to prove to be the identical ANTICHRIST, infinitely exceeds *them* in punctuality and devotion, yet *remains* the identical Antichrist still. Even the lettered sons of immortality, of attic refinement, classical erudition, and, as critics, liberal, generous principles, *when they become bishops*, commence the formal foes of freedom, sentiment, and independence, beyond their *own* line, and the
adjacencies

adjacencies of a *court*. War——ton, L—the, and H—rd, like *common* men, have been sucked into the vortex of *false politicks, false logic, and false divinity!* ——But to reassume our first subject.

THOUSANDS of as faithful subjects as his —— has, from principle and conscience, could not join in the devotions of February 26: struck with the unparalleled inconsistency (not to give it a harsher term) of one half of his ——'s subjects solemnly addressing the Deity, for ability and success to destroy, or trample under foot, *the other half!* The matter of right, on our part, is a matter of assertion. Some millions of our brethren and fellow Protestants, here, and on the other side the Atlantic, think *us* invaders, plunderers, and homicides, in over-running with fire and sword their peaceable habitations. Is Heaven, therefore, to listen propitiously to *us* only, in our boastful pretensions of supreme dominion, and legislative uncontrollability; and not unto *them*, presuming, even *congressionally* presuming, no farther, than simply to *defend* themselves, and *repel* assault? We talk of the centricity and unity of empire, and the absolute necessity we are under of prosecuting the war at all events: but justice, truth, equity, moderation, gentleness, and clemency, form the holy cement that binds and consolidates empire. If *these* are loosened, by whatever cause, empire is in the state of a tottering building: the very first violent commotion, capable of shaking it, will tumble the clumsy, disjointed fabrick to the ground.

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No cause that does not proceed on the general maxims of disinterested humanity, and the cultivated dispositions of *Christian* placability and forbearance, can ever be patronized by Heaven. What regards a party, a territorial corner, a restricted plan of municipal convenience, even with kings and grandees at the head of all, *is not the cause of the Deity*; who regards the species in his universal plan, and not a comparatively few, associated together, *on terms of their own*, in a circumscribed district. If he regards one state, he must regard every state in the same predicament, that is, standing on the same narrow foundation, and moving round and round in the same contracted circle. A circle is not made for *progress*; and power that moves only in a circle, can never go *forward*, but exhibits the parrot (prating and noisy, it is true,) moving round and round in his cage. —

ENGLAND, France, Spain, Germany, Turkey, &c. as political communities, governed independently of each other, by their own laws, are to God objects of the same magnitude and importance, and held in the same degree of friendship and favour. The only difference is, the measure of virtue, integrity of principle, purity of morals, simplicity of manners, unaffected piety, and a public-spiritedness, embracing all mankind, that may happen to distinguish one from the other. Without these primary credentials, these capital recommendations, the antiquity of an

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empire,

empire, the martial and commercial pre-eminence of an empire, or even the *established religion* of an empire, constitutes no priority of claim, no preferable right, with HIM, who sees through no medium, is determined by no local predilection, and is not confined in his judgment or decisions by any test. Nay, even the *Christian* religion immemorially established in a particular state, if it has not had a due influence *there*, and has not produced its proper effects, of piety, holiness, self-denial, generous principles, and unrespecting benevolence, the very essence of *the gospel*; instead of recommending *that state*, and supporting it in the day of trial, it will be an awful witness against it, nay, a solicitor of an heavier punishment than ordinary from heaven, on its insensible, thankless, ungrateful, and unprofiting inhabitants. How ridiculous then, that any one of these enumerated kingdoms, should appoint *Fast Days*, in order to solicit (I had almost said *oblige*) the great God of Heaven to assist her against another kingdom, better perhaps, at least, not worse than herself!—Every state would confine the favour of heaven to its pitiful self, in exclusion of all others, as a rapacious prime minister would monopolize the smiles of his sovereign: in so much that God, by attending to the privy councils and parliaments of a particular state, instead of uniting all nations of the earth (which sooner or later must happen) into one universal equal government,

under

under himself, would be contented to figure away at St. James's, Versailles, or Constantinople, in the lawn sleeves of a bishop, or the embroidery of a courtier. But this is not all.

EVERY kingdom would destroy every other kingdom, did not her own inability, and the general equilibrium of power established among rival and jealous nations, counteract her designs. The sentiment, notwithstanding, subsists deeply imbosomed, permanent, and uniform: nothing but impotence stands in the way. One man meditating the life of another man, has the specific guilt of a murderer, notwithstanding the opportunity, of executing his purpose, has been kept out of his way. It is the same with nations attacking each other, on mere principles of hereditary pride, local jealousy, and territorial lust of domination. The state of hostility ceases not, till both are disabled, or one totally! In this way, since the beginning of time, nations have been desolating and destroying one another, and, to the end of time, the same horrible business will continue. Thus, in the final issue, God's universal empire, a *second theocratic policy*, would never take place; or else one successful unbounded despotic government would swallow up all the rest, and spread over the face of the earth.—

SUCH are the short-sighted jaundiced views of politicians, in appointing *the raree-shew of fast-days*; the illiterature and impiety of bishops, in composing suitable forms of prayer for the occasion; and such the extreme ignorance and credulity, of the mass of the people, to concur and co-operate with them. God will never attend to one man praying for another, unless *that* other be disabled by sickness or idiotism. A form of prayer addressed to the Almighty, composed by a *reverend* junto, actuated by prejudice, prepossession, party, and resentment, which cannot be denied to be the case at present, is *the prayer of a sinner*, whom we are told, *God never hears*. “First
 “be reconciled to thy brother, (is the precept of
 “Christ) and then come, and offer thy gift.” But when stubborn unrelentingness, persevering vengeance, and the unconditional exaction of submission, stimulate *the composers*, and animate *the petition*; God cannot lend a listening ear to them, without falsifying his own repeated declaration, and disavowing the principle on which the religion of his beloved Son is founded, viz. *mercy and forgiveness*. “If ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will
 “your heavenly Father forgive your trespasses.” Finally, on this head, a Form of Prayer composed by bishops, meant and understood as an address to the Deity, and to be presented on a particular day, has not more decency and propriety in it, than a birth-

birth-day ode read at court, pipe and hot from the imagination of the Laureat.

BUT an affecting circumstance is superadded. The newly composed form has, of course, introduced a number of scriptural phrases, with great impiety, to serve the purposes of a party. A party I will again call it, as more than one half of the whole empire, consisting of as wise, substantial, honest men as are in it, reprobate the present war, and its inauspicious projectors. Not only so, but it has given occasion to a thousand low terms of opprobrious abuse; rendering the house of God no better than a brothel or an oyster cellar. Traitor, rebel, sectary, fanatic, have been mouthed over and over again, with the fluency of Billingsgate, on that chaste and immaculate day. Even the backward unassuming Doctors of the meek and lowly Scottish church (Carlyle, Campbell, &c.) on a former occasion of the same kind, forgot the circumstance of their not being *dignified* clergymen, and interlarded their discourses with much political tawdry. *One*, however, may alledge in self justification, that he is King's Professor at Aberdeen, and *the other*, that he is King's Almoner. In reality, clergymen preaching politicks from the pulpit, is much the same thing as if Lord North should preach the gospel from the treasury bench, or Lord Sandwich at a board of admiralty.

MOREOVER,

MOREOVER, it may be likewise considered here, that God knows no treason or rebellion but against *himself*. Treason and rebellion against England, now bellowed from the mouths of ministers, courtiers, sycophants, and bishops, are not treason and rebellion against Heaven. Heaven has not, I believe, made a treaty of alliance offensive and defensive with Great Britain; at least, if such a treaty actually exists, Lord North must have put the schedule in his pocket, without giving the least hint of it to the Houses of Parliament. What, prithee, is England to God, more than France, Portugal, or any other state? The sins and provocations of England, in the impartial eye of Heaven, are no less numerous and rampant than those of any other kingdom we know; her spirit of corruption not less, her spirit of holy hypocrisy not less. Nay, her demerit beyond other nations is not to be concealed or denied. She affects to be the seat of a *reformed Protestant Church*. But let her tell the world (the world has a right to know) in what respect *reformed*? By power and grandeur having been transferred from the pope to bishops, and the vanities and fopperies of an absurd ritual, translated from Rome to London. For my part, I know of no other *essential* reformation, except the single instance of clergymen acknowledging a *temporal*, for a *spiritual* head! Therefore, in the sight of God, who hates pretence, deceit, tyranny, and unjust privileges, at all times, and in every country, England

is

is doubly culpable, and can have no reasonable hope that the supreme Governor of all nations, the King of Kings, and the Lord of Lords, will particularly prosper her fleets and armies. Especially when we reflect, that these fleets and armies are gone forth against a people that never attacked us, till by the great law of retaliation (a spirited and necessary species of self-defence) we *compelled* them to it: a people yet in the simplicity of empire, consequently disengaged and unshorned instruments in the hands of Providence; who have not *established* superstition into a system, or religion into a *trade* among its teachers. Nay, the time seems now hastening on apace, instead of being the favourite of Heaven, that God in his righteous judgments, will punish England, perhaps exterminate her as a nation and people, for the ungrateful use she has made of his wonderful interpositions in her behalf: particularly by *this* the highest aggravation of her guilt, that she has cooped up the gospel of Christ in the hands of an interested rapacious *hierarchy*; and has made Christianity, the chastest, simplest, and most self-denied institution ever the world saw, a mere matter of traffic among bishops, deans, and doctors. God has forbore, for generations, and centuries, to punish England, and her priests, for nominating *another* head of the church, than his *own* Son: for pinning *his* gracious and benign religion to the sleeve of a courtier, or folding it up in the lawn sleeves of a prelate.

prelate. As he did not spare even his own people, *the Jews*, but scattered them like vagabonds, for their crimes and abominations, over the whole earth; how is it that England, whose inhabitants he never called to be his own people, can expect forbearance and mercy. “ If he spared not *the natural* branch, “ how can we expect to be spared, who are branches “ of the wild olive-tree?” And are the sins and transgressions of the British empire, the enormities of ages, to be expunged, to be remembered no more, in consequence of — a proclamation, and to glut the false presumptuous hopes of prelatic pride? Alas! we deceive ourselves, and one another: the time of repentance must bear some proportion to the time of offence; *one* day, one starved miserable day, is not *that* time. We have abundantly proved *one* thing, on the late day of vaunting humiliation: THAT WHILE WE HAVE CEASED TO BE GENUINE CHRISTIANS, WE CAN ACQUIT OURSELVES AS ACCOMPLISHED HYPOCRITES.

I SHALL not here enter into the dispute, whether one set of men have a right to prescribe Forms of Prayer for another: not that I am undetermined in my own mind about it, but to avoid the tediousness of detail, at present. I would only beg leave to observe, in so many words, that I know of no such right belonging to any class of men whatever. Our Saviour alone assumed it, in that simple but admirable

rable *form*, called the Lord's Prayer. The Apostles never did. From whence then have modern bishops the right? Kings cannot bestow it, for they have it not themselves: and as to our bench of spiritual lords, they are not once mentioned throughout all the New-Testament. But to confine myself to my subject. The form of prayer composed for the late Fast-Day, is truly extraordinary. It takes a decided part, in the much controverted question between us and the Colonies. It points out to God our numerous Protestant brethren, on the other side of the Atlantic, as criminal and delinquent, in the first instance; as *traitors* and *rebels*; exculpating ourselves from all blame in our conduct towards them. This is just telling God, that we are *political saints*, and they *political sinners*. "Stand by, for I am holier than thou." We have political *Pharisees*, as well as spiritual. "God, we thank thee, that we are not as other men are, or even as these rebellious and traitorous Colonies." Beside, to *call names*, at "the throne of grace," would seem a most ungracious method of preferring our suit there.—It is admitted, the Form of Prayer makes ample confession of sins and provocations. But these are all *private*, not public and legislative. In respect to these, our *total silence* argues our belief, that *we* are not sinners, but that the *Americans* are. Our miserable situation with America, at present, is the immediate consequence of want of ability, wisdom, and honest intentions, among our rulers and senators. These are

not humbly and candidly acknowledged, in the Form of Prayer ; consequently, as the confession of sins is a previous step towards being forgiven our sins, and as this has not taken place, in a specific sense, relative to our rulers and governors, we have mocked God, and deceived ourselves, on *that day*. Public sins, that is, sins committed by the determining majority in Parliament, and by administration, are the *only* objects of a public Fast-Day. Private-domestic sins must be repented of at home, in our closets, and no where else. This matter strikes me in the fullest and strongest light.

WE have been unfortunate as a nation of late : all our plans wonderfully frustrated, and our arms disgraced. We have fallen many degrees in the estimation of mankind, and in the scale of nations. Our councils are distracted, our national unity broken into parties, and our resources almost exhausted. Have all these happened to us, and one half of the empire been dissevered from the other, without errors, guilt, or criminality, in our ministers and senators ? Impossible ! The one is the cause, and the other the effect. How then could we expect to be heard by Almighty God, on a great national Fast-Day, when *the principal sins of the nation*, those connected with the deliberative and executive powers of government, have not been specified or acknowledged ? Let my lords the bishops answer this awful and important question.

INSTEAD

INSTEAD of confession and humiliation, defined as above, the Fast-Day exhibited a far other scene. Government was extolled and magnified, from the pulpit; the k—— bedaubed with panegyric; and, in short, all the leaders of the present administration represented in the most immaculate light. In proportion too as these were loaded with gross commendation and flattery, the people of America have been nicknamed, abused, and insulted, behind their backs. What doth all this amount to, but the most intolerable proud conceptions of ourselves, and malevolent depreciation of our enemies, contrary to the spirit of that gospel, of which our bishops pretend to be the teachers! With the *private* sins of individuals, in and about the court, we have nothing to do. Their outward confession of them, in a Form of Prayer, is nothing better than the auricular parade of popery. While our rulers confess not those sins and demerits of national magnitude, that have been the cause of our uncommon difficulties and distresses, and in consequence of which, the British empire totters on its foundation, but rather with one consent have cloaked them before the face of Almighty God: what have we to expect from *that day*, but a continuance of our misfortunes, if not an aggravation of them! The bench of bishops stuck up in acts of devotion, on the Fast-Day, that have been all along a dead weight in the minister's scale, therefore, considerably the cause of the blood and destruction attending the American war, was surely one of the most farcick phenomenons in the annals of

this century. There they appeared, not as senatorial and legislative delinquents, giving their consent to oppressive, arbitrary, and sanguinary Acts of Parliament, but forsooth, as penitents for private transgressions, which they do not repent of in private, that is, do not forsake them. But God will not be mocked with this trumpery of false zeal, this pompous translation of repentance from private life, to the public service of *one day*.

PRIVATE vices, no doubt, in the long series of events, and course of things, must be the ruin and overthrow of all nations: but the sudden overwhelming calamities, that happen unexpectedly, and contrary to appearances, in the progress of a year or two, cannot be owing to private vices, but palpable acts of mal-administration, of mis-rule, and misconduct in our governors. As an ingenuous penitential sense of these acts, therefore, has neither been felt nor confessed, what is it the Fast-Day has proved? why, what all the world knows already; that statesmen and bishops, like other men, are sinners, self-condemned sinners, in the domestic walks of life. But no more. If you blame them for repeated legislative acts of tyranny, war, and violence, by which one part of the empire has been dismembered from the other, they positively neither think nor declare themselves culpable: so that the very principle of a public Fast-Day was wanting, the consciousness and confession of *public sins*. Of course, there can be no amendment,

no alteration for the better, in the primary movements of the state.

A SET of men gravely telling God, they are great sinners at home, but never sin at levees, in closetings at St. James's, in privy councils, and parliaments, is asserting each man has two identities; one of which he leaves at home, when he goes to court, and the other dismisses with his coach, when he returns home.—Nay, the matter has a more absurd aspect still. These wonderful men, when the temptations to sin are the greatest, sin least, that is, in lucrative situations of trust under government; with this additional inducement likewise, peculiar to men high in office, that they effectually conceal, and argue away, as far as they can, one another's sins.—Further. The Form of Prayer entreats God to enable us to forgive the Americans. Forgive them (alas!) when we have maimed and mangled them with our bayonets, or after they are dead. This is episcopal forgiveness. “Lord, when I have trampled my enemy under my feet, help me to forgive him.”—Seriously, this is a shameful business, and cannot but bring down the vengeance and indignation of Heaven upon us. To pray for God's patronage and assistance, to shed the blood of a fellow creature, is monstrous and horrible! Our futile distinctions in politics cannot determine the of God peace, though they may determine us, to slaughter Beings of the same species with ourselves. God does not know the

k— of

k— of E——, from any other king upon earth, as a favourite. The Form of Prayer talks of great and marvellous things done for England: but things equally great and marvellous have been done for France and Spain. We enjoy our imperial immunities and independence; so do they. We pretend to be reformed beyond them, yet are not better than they; the greater surely must be our condemnation. We would fain thrust ourselves in as the favourites of Heaven: but in vain! The events of three years have irresistibly proved, that we are not the favourites of Heaven, but cast off from Heaven, on account of the corruption and base venality of our statesmen and senators, the ambition, hypocrisy, and worldlymindedness of our bishops. Till *those* relinquish their bribes, and *these* their secularities, we shall fast and pray in vain. “When ye spread forth
 “your hands, I will hide mine eyes from you; yea,
 “when ye make many prayers, I will not hear.
 “YOUR HANDS ARE FULL OF BLOOD!”

Two or three other considerations occur on this subject.—As a member of humanity, which comprehends the species, and at the head of which is God himself; also, as a disciple of the great Christian Lawgiver, who, as such, has commanded me *to call no one master upon earth*, I must take the liberty of reprehending a passage in the pro——— that instantly affects my allegiance to God and his Son. We are enjoined in that court rescript, reverently and devoutly

voutly to observe the Fast Day, "as we tender the
 " favour of Almighty God, and would avoid his
 " wrath and indignation," *together* with the menace-
 ment of being punished by the civil magistrate, in
 cases of non-compliance with the matter of the pro-
 —. If these are only words of course put together in
 popish arbitrary times, in consequence of canonical
 device, I would let them pass as *vox et præterea nihil*.
 But if indeed they would be understood to mean
 what is expressed, I protest against the authority that
 dictated them, and give it freely as my opinion, that
 every honest and independent Briton should do the
 same. In a political sense, I acknowledge George III.
 my king and governor; but as substituting himself
 in place of Almighty God, by dealing out his wrath
 and indignation, I cannot, and do not, acknowledge
 him. That the wrath and indignation of God should
 be summoned and dealt out by pro——, is an
 unheard-of circumstance! the Pope (the allowed
 Antichrist) pretends to inflict the terrors and punish-
 ments of another world; but that a Protestant ——g
 should imitate the Pope of Rome, in so enormous an
 assumption of power, affects me with surprise and re-
 gret!——The bishops advised him, but cannot bring
 him off with decency or honour: bishops—the in-
 cendaries and disturbers of all states.

“ My

“ My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge:
 “ *their shepherds* have caused them to go astray.
 “ The priest and prophet have erred through strong
 “ drink: they are swallowed up of wine: they are
 “ out of the way with strong drink. They err in
 “ vision: they stumble in judgment. They are
 “ dumb dogs, sleeping, lying down, loving to slum-
 “ ber: yea, they are *greedy dogs, all looking their own*
 “ *way, every one for his gain from his quarter.* Their
 “ land is full of silver and gold, neither is there any
 “ end of their treasure. Their land is full of horses,
 “ neither is there any end of their chariots. *Ye* are
 “ departed out of the way: *ye* have caused many to
 “ stumble at the law: *ye* have corrupted the cove-
 “ nant of Levi: *Therefore have I also made you con-*
 “ *temptible and base before all the people,* according as
 “ *ye* have not kept my ways, but have been partial
 “ in the law. When *ye* come to appear before me,
 “ who hath required it at your hand to tread my
 “ courts? bring no more vain oblations: incense is
 “ an abomination unto me: the new moons and the
 “ sabbaths, *the calling of assemblies,* I cannot away
 “ with. *When ye spread forth your hands, I will hide*
 “ *mine eyes from you:* yea, when *ye* make many
 “ prayers, *I will not hear.*—Behold, *ye* fast for *strife*
 “ *and debate, and to smite with the fist of wickedness.* *Ye*
 “ *shall not fast as ye do this day,* to make your voice
 “ to be heard on high.—Is not *this* the fast that I
 “ have chosen, to unloose the bands of wickedness:

*“ to undo the heavy burdens, and to let the oppressed go
“ free, and that ye break every yoke.”*

THE Americans are here particularly indebted to the majestic and sententious prophet: but, a greater than any prophet concurs in the delineation of the priesthood. “ Wo unto you, Scribes and Pharisees, “ hypocrites ! for ye are like unto whited sepulchres, “ which indeed appear beautiful outward, but are “ within full of dead men’s bones, and all unclean- “ nefs ; even so, ye also outwardly appear righteous “ unto men, but within, ye are full of hypocrisy and “ iniquity. ALL YOUR WORKS YE DO TO BE SEEN OF “ MEN.”—This is strong scriptural painting, and would seem as applicable to our public teachers *now*, as *then* to the Jewish. Even the gentle, humble, meek, and lowly JESUS, threw off the wonted mildness and serenity of his temper, when he addressed himself to the above time-serving, hypocritical class men. “ Ye serpents ! ye generation of vipers ! how “ can ye escape the damnation of hell ?” Were he now upon earth to contemplate the avarice, worldly-mindedness, secularity, and corruption, of our *established* teachers, he could not but use the same acuated and indignant language. I would shelter myself under his high authority, and would conclude scriptural quotations with the following from a great Apostle, instantly addressed to proud professing Christians, the vapouring devotees of Fast Days by

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pro——.

pro——. “ HOW TURN YE AGAIN TO THE WEAK
 “ AND BEGGARLY ELEMENTS, WHERE UNTO YOU AGAIN
 “ DESIRE TO BE IN BONDAGE ! YE OBSERVE DAYS,
 “ AND MONTHS, AND TIMES, AND YEARS:——I AM
 “ AFRAID OF YOU, LEST I HAVE BESTOWED UPON YOU
 “ LABOUR IN VAIN !——

It is connected with the foregoing to remark, that as we have failed, for three inglorious campaigns, to *fight* the Americans into submission, we mean now to *pray* them into submission : but surely our *prayers* will prove as disgracefully unsuccessful as our *arms*. To pray for divine aid to execute vengeance and inflict death, to let loose every passion of the human mind, in direct repugnance to the spirit and requisitions of that benign and merciful religion vouchsafed to us in great kindness by that very BEING to whom we pray—what shall I call the deed ? Language offers me no appropriate term ! We must go to Lambeth, or St. James’s, consult the bishops, or Lord North, for the emphatic, the descriptive term of ignominy !

WITH gratitude, and a degree of happy expectation, it must be confessed, in the gloom and exigence of our affairs, that we have an illustrious and excellent *few*, to stand in the gap of the Constitution, stem the torrent of corruption, and save a sinking state, Such names as CHATHAM, CAMDEN, RICHMOND,
 SHEL-

SHELBURNE, ABINGDON, &c. in the one house; of SAVILLE, CONWAY, BURKE, BARRE, &c. in the other; will descend to posterity with the most honourable commemoration, and grateful respect. Some few sons of literature also, writing under the banners of freedom, not of a pension, kept steady by the intrinsic goodness of their cause, not by the prostitute bribe of a minister, will not be forgotten in the most splendid pages of biographical immortality. Dr. PRICE deserves pre-eminent notice, for his dispassionate, clear, and accurate delineation of those original principles on which our freedom, honour, and property, as Britons, rest, and can only rest. He has been abused, insulted, and ridiculed, by the hacknied, hired penmen of government, but he has not been *answered*. They have been picking pebbles out of the walls, and espying little cracks and blemishes in the finishing; but the building itself, the noble fabric he has raised, stands majestically unloosened and unmoved.—

How happy for Great Britain, at this ill-omened crisis of her fortune, when numerous regiments are raising by *private subscription*, unrecognized, and unauthenticated by parliament, that may latterly be employed against *herself*, to destroy her liberty and independence; how happy for her preservation, and truest interests, that she has senators and writers, as superior to their adversaries in argument and reasoning,

ing, as they are in the worthiness, rectitude, and disinterestedness of their cause!—among the most distinguished, likewise of modern writers, on the sacred side of liberty, may be mentioned Mrs. MACAULAY: a writer— who has not an equal in her own sex, nor a superior in ours. We might also mention Dr. PRIESTLEY, in the select respectable list. May they increase, good God! as our national power, safety, glory, and prosperity, seem to decrease. “Wisdom standeth on the top of high places, by the way in the places of the paths: she crieth at the gates, at the entry of the city, at the coming in of the doors. Unto you, O men! I call, and my voice is to the sons of men. O YE SIMPLE! UNDERSTAND WISDOM, AND, YE FOOLS! BE OF AN UNDERSTANDING HEART.”



THE END.

